

ORIGINAL

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21

BURO STAIRÉ MILEATA 1913-21

No W.S. 456

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BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 456

Witness

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Co. Dublin.

Identity

O/C. Ardpatrick (Co. Limerick) Company
Irish Volunteers 1913 - ,

O/C. Galtee Battalion (later Brigade) 1915 - ,
Member of I.R.B., East Limerick, 1916 - .

Subject

National activities 1913-1920.

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Statement by Mr. Liam Manahan.

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MAGAHAN,

STATEMENT BY MR. LIAM

I am a native of Ballylanders, County Limerick. In 1910 I was concerned with the formation of Gaelic League classes, and in 1913, between Kilmallock Gaelic League and myself, we engaged a teacher for Kilmallock and Ardpatrick.

Before the inaugural meeting of the Volunteers in Dublin, I was talking to people about the possibility of organising the Volunteers. Some time at the end of 1913 I held a meeting with the Gaelic Athletic Association in Ballylanders, concerning the organisation of Volunteer corps there. This was the first introduction of the organisation to East Limerick. Tadhg Crowley was present at the meeting and was proposed as one of the secretaries. The first Company actually formed in that area, not including Limerick City, was Ardpatrick in or about 12th April, 1914. At the same time, a Company was formed in Mitchelstown. Towards the end of April, the group from Mitchelstown and myself met at Ballylanders to form the first Company there. On the same day as the meeting was held in Ballylanders and while drilling in the school yard there, Lawrence Kettle, who with Seán McDermott had arrived in Tipperary, having heard we were active, came on the scene. Kettle's new uniform excited great interest.

In a short time, we had the whole area organised with Mitchelstown as centre. A Military Council, representing

the whole area, was established there about May, 1914.

Early in May, Tom Byrne came to Galbally and started a Company there. After Redmond's proposal, Galbally Company remained together, when most of the Companies split. This was one of the first Companies formed. Other Companies were formed in Anglesboro, Dungrud, Kilfinane and Kilmallock. We had formed a local Military Council to control and direct the organisation of Volunteers in the area, and this Council engaged the retiring chief Military Instructor, a Sergeant-Major Gleeson, Kilworth Camp, to direct training. Training was carried on in each area by the ex-soldiers, most of whom were reservists. The position on the declaration of war was that these reservists were called up and, as a result, most of the training ceased in our area. When Redmond's proposal came along, the Companies for the most part were split. Galbally and Mitchelstown held together as Irish Volunteers, but Ardpatrick had only twelve men left. Other Companies were much the same. There was very little activity.

About the end of June, 1914, there was to be a review by Casement and Colonel Moore of one thousand Volunteers in Mitchelstown, but Casement left for the U.S.A. that week, so the review was carried out by Colonel Moore only. Some of these Volunteers came from Cork. There was also a review by *Tom* MacNeill at Lough Gur later. I attended there with the Cycle Corps, which I had organised.

The next important event was the arrival of Monteith. On the Sunday following Monteith's deportation order, I was in

Dublin, at O'Rahilly's house (in Herbert Park), arranging with O'Rahilly to get arms, when Eoin MacNeill came in with George Clancy of Limerick. Clancy said they would be glad to get Monteith to Limerick and that it would be an opportunity for all of us to get special training. Monteith, therefore, came to Limerick to take charge of the training and organisation of the Volunteers in Limerick City, but we were also able to make use of his services in the county, and, on the nights he was not engaged in training with the city Volunteers, he travelled to the outlying towns and villages, beginning with Ballylanders, and Newcastle West and later Galbally. Training revived as a result of Monteith's efforts. Some time later in 1915, we were able to parade over three hundred men in Ballylanders. When I was about to address the Volunteers on that occasion, the police went in on a by-way to see what was going on, but the Volunteers refused to allow them to come near the vicinity of the parade.

A proposal was made at that time, with a view to helping the organisation in Limerick, by bringing a Battalion of Volunteers from Dublin to come down to help to swell a parade arranged for Whit Sunday, 1915. Actually, for this parade a Volunteer contingent from Galbally, Mitchelstown, units from the other Companies, and some from Cork City and County, came. I particularly remember Seán Hales with a group from West Cork, as well as the Dublin contingent.

A group of Dublin men scattered throughout the city during the day, and were attacked here and there. This led

to a general melee in the place; and the Volunteers were then paraded into the Park and here their rifles were put away under guard. This was shortly before the trains home were due. The Cork train, on which we travelled, was the first to pull out, and we went towards the station. As we got to the station, there was a mob around the gate. There was only the small side gate open, and difficulty of access gave the mob an opportunity of attack. One man lost his rifle. Some of the Galbally Volunteers fired a few revolver shots over the heads of the crowd, which scattered, and this gave an opportunity to those behind of getting into the station through the gates. The Volunteers were facilitated in doing this, because of the fact that some of the Limerick Volunteers, who had got into mufti, mixed with the crowd and helped to suppress the more rowdy elements.

To go back for a moment to the situation following the 'split', I came to Dublin specially to see how things were and I had an interview with Pearse. William Sears was with him. I asked Pearse about the situation, and he said: "Dublin is solid with us". He exhorted me to do my best about the measures for organisation.

After Monteith had left Ireland some time in the autumn of 1915, Ernest Blythe visited the area as Volunteer Organiser, and it was as a result of his visit that the Companies were formed into a Battalion. This was known as the Galtee Battalion, by a special permission of the Executive, because this Battalion incorporated parts of Cork,

Limerick and Tipperary. Battalion and Company officers were elected.

We held a meeting, at which delegates from all the Companies were present. I was not present at this meeting. An election of Battalion and Company officers was held. David Walsh, Mitchelstown, was elected Battalion Commandant, and I was elected Vice-Commandant. For some reason, David Walsh was unable to act, and a further election was held some time later, about September, in Galbally. Blythe was present at this meeting and I was also present, and I was elected Battalion Commandant. James H^Aenigan was named as Battalion Adjutant but, in fact, Patrick Coughlan, B.E., always acted in that capacity.

In October, a Training Camp, under the control of the late Colonel O'Connell, was begun in the area. This was a continuation of a series of Camps which had begun in Wicklow. I was asked to arrange an itinerary for this Camp, locations, etc., and I duly did so. Certain officers from the area attended the Camp, including myself, Tadhg Crowley, Mick Sullivan, Mitchelstown, David Walsh, Mitchelstown, David Burke of Emly. In the course of this Camp, the local Companies at Mitchelstown, Galbally and Ardpatrick were used in field exercises.

I was present at the Second Volunteer Convention in the Abbey Theatre on 31st October, 1915. I was representing East Limerick. It was at this Convention that I made a

proposal regarding training over the winter period, and to organise winter classes when the young men of the country would be less busily engaged. Tomás MacCurtain and Terence MacSwiney were very much interested in this. Before leaving town, they arranged with Headquarters that Colonel O'Connell would go to Cork. The officers' training course, which was conducted by Colonel O'Connell in Cork and which I attended, lasted for two weeks from the 22nd January, 1916. This course had a wonderful influence on the organisation, training and development of the Cork Volunteers in the county and in Kerry.

Some time about September, 1915, I attended a meeting of the Volunteer Executive in ^{DAWSON} ~~ROBERT~~ Street, Dublin. MacNeill presided at this meeting. Also present were Pearse, MacDonagh, Bulmer Hobson, Éamon Ceannt, Seán Fitzgibbon, Seumas O'Connor, Liam Mellows from Galway, and Joe Doherty of Derry. There were others present also. The question of training was discussed. Ginger O'Connell was appointed instructor general of training. He was also present at the meeting.

A controversy arose regarding the suitability or otherwise of officers carrying rifles. Hobson and some others thought it undesirable. Pearse was strongly of opinion that, at least in our organisation, there was no reason why they should not be so armed. I was looking for arms, as was Liam Mellows for Galway, and, as a result of our plea, a contribution of about five rifles was made in

connection with this discussion. At least five members of the Executive agreed to hand over their rifles to Mellows, which he took to Galway with him.

At this meeting also I got the impression that the members of the Executive were not in entire harmony with each other. To me, it seemed that there was a definite cleft, represented on the one side by Hobson, Seumas O'Connor, Fitzgibbon and others, and the other side represented by Pearse and Ceannt, in particular. MacNeill, who presided at the meeting, held himself aloof. Ginger O'Connell also did not appear to take any sides. I also got the impression at this meeting of a rapid development of things towards some sort of a crisis, but without any urgency.

A special St. Patrick's Day parade was arranged in the city of Limerick for the 17th March, 1916. Our Company were given authority by the Executive to hold a parade on our own at Ardpatrick for the Galtee Battalion. This was the first time we had a full dress parade with arms. On this occasion, Mitchelstown Company did not parade with us at Ardpatrick as they, being in Cork County, went to Cork, but the remainder, about four hundred strong, turned up, and nearly all were armed with weapons of some kind. A couple of months previous to this, we had obtained a consignment of shotguns, with bayonets made for them, from Dublin city.

On my return from London, where I had business, on Friday, 15th March, 1916, I called to Dawson Street, Dublin, to seek information on the situation. I met Tomás MacDonagh and had a discussion with him. I told him of my anxiety

about the situation. I had arranged for an interview with MacNeill, and I told MacDonagh about this. He asked me to let him know the result of my interview with MacNeill.

On the same day, I went to see MacNeill at Woodlawn, Rathfarnham. I told him that I considered the situation was rapidly approaching a serious crisis and that certain things were necessary to do, such as, a speeding up in organisation and training. I proposed that I would devote all my time and energies to the work of organising and training the area, and that I would give up my present employment as Creamery Manager to do this.

MacNeill tried to reassure me that the situation had become more settled. He referred to an interview he had with Connolly, in regard to Connolly's attitude. Everybody knew that Connolly was putting pressure on MacNeill and the Volunteer Executive towards a more active military policy, and MacNeill said that Connolly had now modified his attitude - he appeared to be more amenable.

On returning to MacDonagh, I informed him of the result of my interview with MacNeill. MacDonagh discounted the whole matter and said that it was most important that I should wait over and attend a meeting that night, to meet Pearse and others - the meeting to be held that night at eight o'clock. Since I had heard word from my area that, during my absence, the arrangements for the St. Patrick's Day parade had become disorganised, due to the activity of the National (Redmondite) Volunteers, I considered it was most important that I should return by the 6.30 p.m. train, and I

told MacDonagh so, and that I would come up again, as soon as possible.

We brought off our parade successfully, but I did not have an opportunity of coming to Dublin again until the Thursday of Holy Week. On arrival in Dublin, I went to the Volunteer Headquarters at 6, Dawson Street. I spent some time discussing things with Bulmer Hobson and Ginger O'Connell. This was some time before mid-day. I was amazed at their complacency, in view of the critical situation which I felt to exist. I was trying to elicit information from them, but they seemed to be carrying on with their daily routine and appeared quite satisfied that everything was well. Whatever question did come up between us, regarding the seriousness of the situation, they pooh-poohed it and indicated there was no cause for anxiety. They were upstairs. Having left them and entering the door of the main office, I walked into MacDonagh. He interrupted my greeting to ask me: "What, in the name of God, are you doing here?". "You should be back in your area", he said. MacDonagh was very excited, and this in strong contrast to Hobson and O'Connell, whom I had just left. This completely changed the atmosphere for me. I felt that something was happening or about to happen. I said: "This is extraordinary. I have been with O'Connell and Hobson, who seemed to have no awareness of anything unusual". He said: "O'Connell should be back in his area. He probably has orders awaiting him there, as you should have in yours". I said: "What are the orders?". He said: "When is the next

train?". I said, "I.30". He said, "are you armed?". "I have a revolver", I said. He said, "maybe you better have another. Have you money?" I said, "yes". He said, "You'd better take the next train back". Then, suddenly he said, "no". I said, "where are we anyway?". Then he said, "as you are here now, you better come and see Pearse".

He took me immediately down to Seán McDermott's office on the Quays. There were some people there, including Ginger O'Connell whom I had left in Hobson's office. I immediately noticed a most unusual seriousness on Seán McDermott's face. I had never seen Seán McDermott otherwise but laughing - now he was tense, no smile on his face. The presence of the others created a certain awkward situation so we did not speak freely. MacDonagh had a word with McDermott and came back to me to say that it was impossible to get Pearse at that particular moment. I left without having seen Pearse.

I got the 6.30.p.m. train, arriving at 12 o'clock. The orders which MacDonagh referred to had not reached me from Limerick. I had dispatched orders to the companies to be in readiness next morning, and later in the evening of Good Friday I got orders from Limerick delivered by Alphonsus Kivlehan. I cannot remember whether the orders were in writing or verbal, but they came from Colivet in Limerick.

A mobilisation for manoeuvres had already been arranged for Easter Sunday and as a result of this order I altered the place of mobilisation. The orders were to the effect that on mobilisation we would move west and take certain police barracks, such as Ballylanders and Charleville

and hold the railway line from Adare to Newcastle West. Where possible we were to take over the rifles from the R.I.C. but while doing this to do everything possible to avoid shooting. I did not anticipate any difficulty at Ballylanders and Kilfinnan but I doubted the reception I would get at Kilmallock. On Friday night I sent out the necessary orders for the mobilisation; in the orders I sent out to the Companies I ordered them to parade with arms.

On Saturday I read of the capture of an arms ship off Fenit. As I knew that the holding of the railway line was in connection with the shipment of arms which had now been captured, I realised that the plans had to be altered and I fell back on the plans as previously arranged.

Some of the Companies, such as Mitchelstown, had begun their move on Saturday evening, bivouacing along the route. A dispatch rider, Mick Sullivan from Mitchelstown, came to say that they did not like the idea of parading with our arms in view of the situation existing in connection with the general crisis. They had to take these arms out of dumps and expose them and were afraid of having them seized. I sent a reply to the Company that a parade with arms was a definite order.

Sunday morning the Companies were on the move everywhere. In most country places there are two Masses on Sunday mornings. Some of the Volunteers had attended early Mass and others were attending the later Mass at 11 o'clock on their way to the place of mobilisation. About 11 o'clock I had seen the Ballylanders Company parade when a despatch rider, Mick Sullivan from Mitchelstown, arrived with a message from the Captain of the Company in which he brought McNeill's order which had been given to him by The O'Rahilly at Anglesboro'.

O'Rahilly was on his way from Mitchelstown to Tipperary.
This order read;

"Volunteers completely deceived....etc.
(as published in the Press at the time)...
"All orders for Sunday cancelled".

Because of my recent interview with MacDonagh I decided to proceed with the manoeuvres. We arrived at Galbally and carried out the manoeuvres. Later we paraded in the Square in Galbally for Battalion drill and held the Battalion together till after 6 o'clock, when it began to rain. Some of the officers pointed out that they had long distances to travel home. Having had McNeill's order repeated five times from Tipperary, from Charleville, and from Limerick, by a special despatch rider, I despaired of any further developments and dismissed the parade.

When the parade in Galbally was dismissed on Easter Sunday evening, I went home to Ardpatrik.

On Easter Monday, I went to business at Ardpatrik Creamery. I carried on my ordinary work on Monday and heard nothing about what was going on until after mid-night when there was a knock on my bedroom window. Michael Murphy, who was then Captain of the Ardpatrik Company, was the caller, and he informed me that he had been in Kilmallock and that, at a late hour - after eleven o'clock that Monday night - information of some sort had come to Kilmallock that fighting had started in Dublin.

Michael Murphy and I went round to get despatch riders. We called up some of our local men, and succeeded in getting a couple of despatch riders. To the best of my memory, one of these was Bill Dwane, I don't remember who the others were. I sent messages to the different areas, such as, Mitchelstown, Galbally and Charleville, warning them to be on the alert. Hoping I should get some order, I remained in Ardpatrik for that day, Tuesday, although

I kept away from the Creamery, fearing arrest. In one way or another I had notified the different Companies - I can't remember how, now - that I would be in Ballylanders that evening and until further notice, as this was more central and better organised for despatch work.

Late that night - Tuesday - despatch riders from Mitchelstown and different other areas arrived, to be at hand awaiting orders. They remained there Tuesday night and over Wednesday.

On Wednesday I was getting rather impatient at not receiving any orders. I sent two despatch riders to Hospital, which was my connection with Limerick, with instructions that, failing to get any information there, they were to continue on to Limerick. The names of the two men I sent on this mission are Patrick Sullivan of Mitchelstown and Cornelius Kiely of Ballylanders. I should say it was about mid-day, or perhaps earlier, on Wednesday when they left on bicycles; and they arrived back to me at about 9.30 p.m. on the same evening. While awaiting their return, I had nothing to do but to hold the other despatch riders in readiness.

The two despatch riders failed to make the contact in Hospital, and so had to go on to Limerick. On reaching Limerick, they learned that the city was under military control; and they feared to make any attempt at getting in touch with important Volunteer officers there. They went to Mr. Batt Laffan of Killonan, who was prominently identified with the movement that time. He went into Limerick, leaving the two despatch riders at his house. On returning, after having been in contact with some of the Volunteer officers in Limerick, he informed the two men that there was no likelihood of any action being taken, in the circumstances then prevailing, i.e., that Limerick

city, like Cork, was under military control.

As a result of what the two men told me on their return, I sent the despatch riders to their different Companies with orders, some of which were written and some verbal, to stand to arms, that there was no definite order yet, but that they were to stand by.

Two of my despatch riders, Nicholas Condon and Nicholas Dinneen, returned to me, after having delivered this message to Galbally for that particular area.. This was ten O'clock on Wednesday night. They were accompanied by a young stranger. The despatch riders informed me that, just before they left Galbally, he had arrived there from Ballagh, Tipperary, with word that the Volunteers were fighting in Dublin and he ^{had} been sent by Eamonn O'Dwyer to find out what we proposed to do. The despatch riders told me that the officers of Galbally Company did not know what to make of the situation, and thought that, as we had no definite order, we should exercise caution as to any action we might take. I then went out and met this stranger. He told me his name was Seán Treacy. He told me that it was certain that there was fighting in Dublin, that the men in Tipperary were very anxious that something should be done and had expected that we would take some action. His idea was that we should attack all the local R.I.C. barracks around, in order to procure arms, so as to be in readiness, and that, if we lighted fires on the Galtees, it would be the signal to those in Tipperary who wanted to join in with us.

Being satisfied now that the Volunteers were fighting in Dublin, I felt that I would be certain to get orders, as this fighting would likely extend to the country, and

consequently did not feel entitled to take any action on my own. I decided that the best thing I could do in preparation for that was to attack the local R.I.C. barracks and take their arms. I was now at a loss, since my despatch riders had been dismissed. The two who had just come from Galbally, I had sent on to Ballylanders, hoping they would catch up on those from Mitchelstown who had left me for home half-an-hour previously. They were not there. They had left Ballylanders.

I then sent word to the Captain of the Ballylanders Company, Tom Murphy, - I lived almost a mile outside Ballylanders - to send me all the despatch riders he could muster. I cannot understand how the mistake was made, but he sent all his despatch riders to mobilise his own Company. Having waited for some time and, later, learning what had happened, I mustered as many as I could locally - anyone who would carry a message - and sent out orders for immediate mobilisation to Galbally, Mitchelstown, Anglesboro, Kilfinane and Ardpatrick. The members of the Ballylanders Company were arriving through the night. I gave orders to the Galbally Company to join me in the vicinity of Spittal; Mitchelstown I ordered to mobilise at Glenacurraune woods; Kilfinane and Ardpatrick at Thomastown wood. These were safety measures.

My intention was to take Ballylanders Barracks, with the assistance of the Galbally Company; to hold the Ardpatrick and Kilfinane Companies in the vicinity of Kilfinane until I was ready to attack Kilfinane; and to hold Mitchelstown and Anglesboro until I was ready to attack Mitchelstown. Because of what happened in regard to the despatch riders in Ballylanders, it was after midnight on Wednesday when those messages were sent out; and this proved disastrous so far as the plans were concerned, as the Companies could not possibly be mobilised *in time*.

At six o'clock on Thursday morning, I was moving out with Ballylanders Company to surround Ballylanders Barracks. I had not then realised that my plans had gone wrong. The Galbally Company had reached Spittal, to join me, about a mile away. Some of my staff officers, notably P.E. Coughlan of Mitchelstown, informed me that word had come from Cork that there was no possibility of military action. He also informed me that the late arrival of my order to Mitchelstown had made it impossible for them to mobilise and procure their arms, and that only a small part of the Company had reached Glenacurrane and, having got no further direction, decided they had better return to Mitchelstown. By this time, despatch riders returning from the other areas told me it would be late in the morning before they could get their men together.

In consultation with Coughlan and considering general conditions and the fact that neither Cork nor Limerick were taking any action, we decided it was better to demobilise and await more definite orders.

We heard nothing further until we learned of the surrender in Dublin on the following Sunday.

Because of my absence from business in the Creamery at Ardpatrick during Easter Week, the business had got into rather chaotic condition, and I had, therefore, to remain constantly on duty in the following week to try and get matters straightened out. Accordingly, I did not learn until late in the following week that some of the Companies had been in touch with Limerick where, through the agency of Bishop O'Dwyer, the surrender of the Volunteer

arms had been arranged, and the Limerick officers had advised these local Companies to hand up their arms, which they had done. I had no knowledge of the handing up of arms at all until this was all over.

On the second Sunday after Easter and after the surrender, some members of the R.I.C. passing through Kilfinane accosted me and informed me that all arms in the area and all over the country had been handed up, with the exception of Ardpatrik Company; and that, therefore, all the members of Ardpatrik Company were likely to be arrested and deported. Considering that all the other arms had been surrendered, I did not think it would be fair to the Ardpatrik men to hold out. So I instructed them to hand in their arms if they cared to do so. As a result of this instruction, some arms were handed in; others were not. There were only two or three rifles in the Company and these were not handed up. The arms that were handed up were principally shotguns; and some of these were broken before being handed in.

It was because of the surrender of arms which was negotiated with the British Commander in Limerick, Sir Anthony Weldon, and through Bishop O'Dwyer, that the British Commander decided that no arrests would take place in Limerick City or County following the Rising.

Following the events of Easter Week, the Volunteer organisation was in a state of suspense, and I did my best by keeping contact with the leaders and the officers of the Galtee area.

Up to Easter Week, the Galtee Battalion had been a constituent unit of the Limerick Brigade. After the events of Easter Week, however, and because of our difficulty in

maintaining communications, and the fact that we found, on going over the area, that we were up to Brigade strength, we decided to organise on Brigade lines. The Galtee Battalion now became the Galtee Brigade, for all practical purposes. I cannot fix an exact date for this transition, because it was going on over a period of months.

Some time prior to Easter Week, I was initiated as a member of the I.R.B. This was believed to be necessary, because the Volunteer leaders were making use of that organisation. The reason Pearse and McDonagh had gone into that organisation was that it was in the general interests of the national cause. Having worked under cover and in order to try to hold the men together in organising after Easter Week, I initiated several of the best men in each area; and it was through the I.R.B., at first, that contact was kept up.

As soon as we considered it possible, a meeting of the I.R.B. was held in Limerick City to discuss re-organisation. I attended as representative of my area. As far as I understood, it was a meeting of Head Centres. To the best of my recollection, it was held in St. Ita's Hall (a Gaelic League Hall) in Thomas Street. George Clancy, Seán Ó Muirthile, James Ledden were present, as well as several others whom I cannot remember, including someone from Clare.

At the meeting, in the course of some criticisms regarding the events of Easter Week in that area, I was accused of having acted without orders, first, by carrying on manoeuvres on Easter Sunday after I had got a despatch cancelling them, and next, by having mobilised for active service without any orders. I said I considered I was called upon to do something when I learned that fighting

was going on in Dublin, Seeing those, whom I thought were the extreme section, taking the attitude of caution in this crisis, when my own feelings were regret and frustration that something more positive had not been achieved, my confidence in the I.R.B. was shaken, and I made up my mind that the Galtee Brigade would pursue its own course, without reference to the I.R.B. or anybody else.

In the autumn of 1916, a meeting of the Volunteers was called in Limerick city, in connection with the re-organisation of the Volunteers. Notice of this meeting was sent to each Company, but not all the Companies were aware of the meeting as, in some instances, the men who received the notices were not then active members. This meeting, which was held in the Fianna Hall, Limerick, was presided over by Michael Colivet. The matter of a new league, formed in Dublin and called the "Nation League", that somebody believed would be a good way of holding the organisation together, came up for consideration. I attacked this proposal, and had the support of all the delegates, with the exception of about two or three. We decided to proceed with organising on the old lines. My feelings were that this was a purely political organisation, which might easily submerge the military movement, and that all our efforts should be directed towards re-organising on military lines. I do not remember any special decisions being arrived at by that meeting. The organising of the Galtee Brigade went ahead gradually after that.

Early in February, 1917, I was awakened in the early morning and found myself surrounded by police. I was in Ardpatrick at the time. I was escorted to Limerick jail, under the District Inspector from Bruff. I remember I was terribly concerned that the police might have had some

special information about the extent of our organisation or, in some way, might have come into possession of despatches. On arriving at Limerick Jail, however, I was greatly relieved on that score when I found that Ó Muirthile, Colivet, McInerney and Michael Brennan had also been arrested. We learned that our arrests were in connection with supposed arrangements for a landing of arms. After a day or so in Limerick Jail, during which time we were joined by three Kerry men, Joe Malinn, Billy Mullins and Michael Moriarty, we were brought to Arbour Hill, Dublin, where we were served with deportation orders, requiring us to reside in particular places in England. In the case of our particular group, it was Wetherby, Leeds, Yorkshire.

We were sent to England, under military escort, and handed over to the Military Governor in Yorkshire, who, I believe, was Sir John Maxwell, although we did not see him on the occasion. We were then brought to Wetherby, still under escort, and handed over to the police authorities there. The Police Superintendent, who appeared to be a kindly man, informed us that we were under police surveillance and all our movements would be watched. He said that he wanted to treat us as humanly as possible, that we could go for walks around the place and on the country roads, to the extent of a mile or so, but that we were not to move outside the vicinity of Wetherby town. We thanked him for his kindness, but told him that we had no intention whatever of abiding by any orders, which he or the British military might make, and that we regarded our deportation from our country as an outrage which we felt in duty bound to circumvent in any way we could. Lodgings had been arranged for us, but we would have to be

responsible for payment for these. It seemed to be assumed that we might either find employment for ourselves, or make provision for ourselves out of our own resources. There were some German prisoners-of-war, presumably on parole, working around the country with the farmers. We met some of them.

There was a great deal of local curiosity as to what we were going to do, or how we were going to live. We made it known very quickly that we were not taking any sort of employment there. Arrangements were made by the National Aid Association in London to make some provision for us. Some of us felt that our position was undignified and that we should make an attempt to escape back to Ireland, or, failing that, that the attempt ought to be made, even if it meant being arrested and held in close confinement. As we did not seem to find agreement on that point, we thought we should get a direction from headquarters in Dublin.

Seán Ó Muirthile was understood to be in communication with Dublin. He had gone to London on one occasion to attend a concert held in the Albert Hall on St. Patrick's Day, and made contact with the deportees in the other areas in England. Still, nothing definite was happening, and we met specially on one occasion to discuss the matter. Michael Brennan and myself gave notice that, if no order was forthcoming, it was our intention to attempt to escape. Seán Ó Muirthile asked if we would take an order from him. Prior to this, there had been some sort of disagreement between Seán Ó Muirthile and the rest of the party, regarding the money supplied from London. There was an allowance of £2 per week per head for our living expenses.

Seán Muirthile handled the money and paid all expenses. If anyone wanted a few shillings, for any reason, he had to ask for it. Some of the men had wives and children, who were then existing on very small allowances from the National Aid, and, when they complained to me that the arrangement was not fair, I demanded that Seán Ó Muirthile should hand over the £2 per week allowance to each man as it was received by him. There also may have been other incidents of this nature.

It was in this atmosphere of antagonism that Seán Ó Muirthile had posed the question of whether we would take an order from him. I rather abruptly said that we would not. I understood, of course, that he was secretary of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., and so, I think, did all the others, but they all supported me. Probably arising from this, information on the matter having reached Dublin, Fintan Murphy was sent over, some time later, to make contact with the various deportee groups. Murphy made contact with us some time before the Longford election, and he arranged that all who desired to escape should try to get away and reach Ireland on the same date, so that all could have an equal chance to catch the boats, leaving Holyhead and Liverpool on the evening of the particular day they left their areas. A date was fixed, which I cannot now remember. All those, who made the attempt, succeeded in getting to Dublin the following morning, some to Dúnlaoghaire and some to the North Wall.

In our case, six of us walked out of Wetherby in the early morning, taking trains, two by two, from different outside stations and getting into Manchester in the course of the afternoon, where we were taken care of by Liam McMahon and his friends. From Manchester we went to Holyhead, I think, and arrived at the North Wall, Dublin, safely the following morning.

To clarify my connection with the I.R.B. in the reference I have already made, I had no wish to become a member but, when I became aware that Volunteers in Galbally, Ballylanders and Mitchelstown were members, it appeared to me to be necessary, for the sake of order and direction, that I should join. I was initiated at the end of 1915, or early in 1916. All activities were carried on through the Volunteer organisation, until a young man, named James Galvin, from Kerry came for a time to Ballylanders and organised the circles on a proper system. I still did not use the system but, after Easter Week, open work being impossible and in order to hold the organisation together, I used the I.R.B. to get in the most reliable men in each district, in addition to those who were already members. As soon as it was possible, the open work of organisation was carried out through the Irish Volunteers. Very little was done through I.R.B. circles, as far as I know, and the only meeting of any importance I ever attended is the one in Limerick after Easter Week, to which I have already referred. It then struck me as peculiar that so few of the leading officers were present at that meeting.

On my arrival in Dublin, after escaping from England, I was staying at Pearse's, Oakley Road. One night, about a week after my arrival, I was summoned to a meeting at 4, Connaught Avenue, Phibsboro. David Sears accompanied me across the city. Those present were Seamus O'Doherty, Dr. Patrick McCartan, Seán Ó Muirthile, Dr. Seamus Ó Ríain and Pádraig Ó Máille. During a rather general discussion, Kevin O'Shiel came in and more or less joined the company. Seamus O'Doherty continued the talk, which was of no particular importance, as far as I could see, but Seán Ó Muirthile was rather severe with him for talking so openly

in the presence of a non-member (O'Shiel). Seamus O'Doherty could not at all understand the reason for this. However, it began to appear that there was some important business to be discussed. Seán Ó Muirthile took me aside and said they wanted to know if I were going to be actively associated with the I.R.B. I told him that I could not then give an answer. He pointed out the difficulties with which I might be faced, in trying to carry on military activities while still remaining in business, and said that, in the event of my having to give up business, the only organisation that could help me was the I.R.B. which was getting all the funds coming from the United States. While in Dublin, I had been hearing criticisms of the I.R.B. from various sources, and I was not at all happy regarding the organisation. The mention of funds, in this connection, definitely decided me, though I did not say so then. When Seán Ó Muirthile began to press the point, I said that there were many things to be considered in regard to the organisation generally, and that I was having a meeting with Cathal Brugha the following evening. Ó Muirthile very definitely warned me against having any discussion, relating to the I.R.B., with Brugha, saying that he had been President but had retired after Easter Week. I said that I had to discuss the military situation generally with him.

On the following evening, I went to Brugha's house. In the course of a very long discussion, matter, in relation to the activities of the I.R.B. prior to and during Easter Week, arose, for instance, the manner in which leakages of information had taken place. Brugha said that he was not in a position to discuss the I.R.B., as he had left that organisation, but he believed that the I.R.B., as such, had been a failure in Easter Week. He

further believed that the time had come to carry on our work through one open organisation of the Republican Army, which was then being referred to as the I.R.A.. Feeling myself in agreement with this, I definitely decided that, as far as I was concerned, all military activities in future would be through the Irish Republican Army, and that I would leave my connection with the I.R.B. inoperative.

Those of us who had escaped from England were informed by the Volunteer people, with whom we were in contact, that we were expected to remain in Dublin, awaiting some definite instruction. As none was forthcoming, Colivet and McInerney decided to go to Limerick and, a week later, I went home.

As the military were very active, trying to get us into custody again, I did not take up any active work in my district for some time.

Following the Longford election and in the course of the victory celebrations at Ballylanders, the police arrested three Volunteers, Tadhg Crowley, Tom Murphy and John Crawford. These men were first taken to Limerick Jail, and subsequently brought to Court in Galbally, where they were sentenced to three months' imprisonment. A large crowd assembled at Galbally, and there was a very heavy police guard - up to 150 men - under the command of the County and District Inspectors. There were clashes with the police in the Square of Galbally during the Court proceedings. When the prisoners were being escorted from the courthouse to the car, a rush was made by the crowd to rescue them, and they were beaten back by the police. In some of these rushes, the police pursued some of the crowd with batons, numbers of people being struck and injured. On observing this, some of the Volunteers got

stones, or any weapon handy, and about twelve policemen were injured. When the prisoners had been taken away, the police retired to the barracks and, evidently with the intention of clearing the streets, were coming out armed. I was in O'Brien's, where I had a view of what was happening at the barracks, and I attempted to get out, in order to find out what was the situation in the Square. Some of the people present tried to hold me back, fearing that an attempt to arrest me would lead to further trouble. However, I succeeded in getting on a bicycle and arrived at the Square. Hugh O'Brien-Moran, solicitor defending the prisoners, was standing up on the fountain, surrounded by a large crowd, mostly Volunteers, and he was appealing to them to disperse. He informed them that the police were about to come out, armed, and, in the circumstances, were quite capable of using their arms. "You are weak", he said, "and they are strong". You should meet them when you are strong and they are weak". Seeing me arriving on the scene, he appealed to me to handle the situation, and I mounted the fountain. Recognising many officers and men among the crowd, I gave orders; "Ballylanders, Anglesboro, Dungrud, Lissard, line up your men". I gave instructions and ordered "Quick march". The Square was immediately vacated, and the armed police found it empty.

Some time afterwards, I was amazed to hear that my intervention at Galbally was not welcomed in some quarters. This did not apply to the Volunteers generally. It was suggested that there was some arrangement for a further attack on the police, which was prevented by my intervention.

About this time, I became aware that Donnchadh O'Hannigan, who evidently was I.R.B. organiser and who, by some arrangement, had been supposed to be carrying on in my place during my absence in England, had extended the I.R.B. organisation over the whole area.

A meeting was held in Limerick of representatives from the county and the city to make arrangements to give all possible assistance at the East Clare election. After the meeting, one of the Galbally men told me that things were not at all satisfactory, in regard to the way Volunteer organisation was going and that, in their opinion, the situation was very peculiar. He was not prepared to go into details. There was evidently some sort of inhibition. I then noticed, on meeting Donnchadh O'Hannigan, that his attitude was anything but open or friendly. On one occasion previously, I had seen a man in disguise. It was on the night of the meeting in Dublin at O'Doherty's house, when Pádraig Ó Máille was dressed as a parish priest. Donnchadh O'Hannigan was the only other person in disguise that I ever saw. He was dressed in clericals on this occasion. It appeared very odd indeed, not so much because of his disguise, but because of the general atmosphere that it indicated. I felt nonplussed and uneasy, but could do nothing then, as we were proceeding to Clare.

After the Clare election, the Ballylanders prisoners were released. On the evening of their arrival, the Volunteers were paraded to take part in a demonstration of welcome.

During the course of manoeuvres which were being carried out, I came in contact with some Volunteers who complained of the manner in which things were being handled.

Seamus Scanlan of Galbally, who was pretty outspoken, said that the sooner I took over and asserted myself, the better, as the ground was being cut from under my feet, and that I seemed to have no realisation of how things were going. I determined to do this as soon as possible, but my health was not at all good at the time and I had difficulties about returning to business. One day, a messenger accosted me in Ballylanders, late in the evening, and gave me an order, I think, to attend a meeting. On enquiring from where the order came, I somehow got to understand that it was an I.R.B. order, and I informed him that I was not taking any orders from the I.R.B.

All active Republicans seemed to have concentrated on Clare for the election. On the Sunday prior to the date of the election (11th July, 1917), arrangements were made for speakers to address meetings after Mass in every parish in Clare; and meetings in the afternoon were held in the important centres, mostly addressed by the leaders. We had concentrated at O'Callaghan's Mills, de Valera and Larry Ginnell being the principal speakers. A delegation from Kilmallock, headed by Seán Lynch, asked me to introduce them to de Valera and to support them in trying to get him to attend a large meeting at an early date at Kilmallock. De Valera, however, was booked up for meetings for several weeks ahead and, much as he wished to do so, was not able to name a date in the immediate future for a meeting.

Some time later, notices announcing a big meeting at Ballylanders on 15th August, which is Pattern Day there, were posted all over the county. It was stated that the meeting was to be addressed by Eamonn de Valera and Eoin MacNeill. I cannot say what steps were taken, beyond the

issue of an invitation to the speakers, to find out if it was possible for them to attend. I believe the public announcement of the meeting was made, while awaiting a reply from the speakers who had been invited. However, as they were unable to attend, it proved rather disappointing for the huge crowd that came to see and hear de Valera. The speakers actually present were Ernest Blythe and Seán Ó Muirthuille. While we were seated at tea after the meeting, Seán Ó Muirthuille was called out by someone. I noticed that a bicycle was provided for him by whoever had called him, and they left the village together. I thought this was peculiar. This was the beginning of the complications that arose between the I.R.B. and myself.

As I learned afterwards, a meeting of the I.R.B. local unit was held that evening in Glenbrohane. Those present were given to understand in a general way that headquarters - taken to be headquarters of the I.R.A. - wanted me set aside as the commander for the area. Various reasons were given for this, such as, my failure to act promptly when mobilising at Easter Week, attack barracks and so on, political ambitions on my part, a supposed meeting with Major Price, British Intelligence Officer, at a time or during a period when, actually, I do not think I ever visited Dublin. Rumours regarding these matters were generally current some weeks later. After the I.R.B. meeting, several of the members returned to Ballylanders with Seán Ó Muirthuille. Many of them were nonplussed and disappointed that there had not been fuller and more open discussion on such charges as were made against me. In this spirit, while having some refreshments, several having stood "treat", it struck

them as peculiar that Seán Ó Muirthuile did not take advantage of the occasion to stand a drink. When Ned O'Brien was starting for home, he was detained by Ó' Muirthuile outside the door who told him he was to make the position regarding me understood by his fellow officers and others in his company, and also to inform Ernest Blythe, who was then staying in Galbally. O'Brien thought this extraordinary and asked how he could act in regard to matters that were given to them under oath of secrecy, how exactly he should go about it, and what he should say. Ó' Muirthuile gave him an outline of how he should deal with it, and the points of the allegations made against me to which he might refer. Ned O'Brien, a very earnest and sincere man, was very deeply concerned about the whole matter and felt himself very much involved. Thinking over it, he felt that on this occasion, when he had been given an instruction outside of the secret session which he had attended, he was not bound by his declaration of secrecy and that he should discuss the matter with his fellow-officers. He and they, becoming aware of the rumours then current, believed that I should be informed of what was happening.

It was in these circumstances, therefore, that I got the order at Ballylanders, already referred to, and refused to accept it as coming from the I.R.B.

Some time later, I got notification of an I.R.A. meeting to be held at Glenbrohane. Owing to illness, I was unable to attend this meeting. This was rather unfortunate because it appears that many members attended an I.R.B. meeting, which was held afterwards and which had my case under consideration. I did attend a meeting

of the I.R.A. a week later in the same place, and was asked to attend an I.R.B. meeting to be held afterwards. Very few were present at the I.R.B. meeting. I was rather surprised that all the I.R.B. members were not invited to attend, and I felt the position to be very awkward, as some of them, when leaving, said that there were peculiar goings-on and everything was very mixed up.

At this I.R.B. meeting, I was accused of having refused to take an order from the I.R.B. and of having done so in the presence of a stranger. It appears that, when the messenger brought me the order, he was accompanied by someone who was not a member of the I.R.B. I explained that, in the circumstances, I was not prepared to go along with the I.R.B. and that I intended to resign. When O'Hannigan asked me if I would go through the form of swearing out with him, I said I could not do so. I knew little or nothing in regard to what his position really was, and I had in mind the occasion on which Seán Ó Muirthuille threw some doubt on his general reliability. I said I thought that I could only resign to the Supreme Council of the I.R.B., and O'Hannigan said he would arrange for that to happen. I was asked if I intended to take over command of the I.R.A. I said; "Yes, when certain matters are straightened out with headquarters". This was a reference to the rumours, for which I then knew the I.R.B. were responsible. I stated that, at the moment, I could not take over because of my state of health in particular, and my position in relation to business. I also stated that, if it was so desired and at any time they had a better or more suitable man, I was prepared to hand over command. As a result, matters were left undecided, and the position became more and more unsatisfactory.

Following the Clare election, there was a great deal of political activity - local county and central - with all of which I had association. The extraordinary rumours being circulated about myself and the I.R.A. made my position in public life very awkward. My relations with the Committee of the Ardpatrick Creamery, of which I was Secretary and Manager, were very unpleasant, particularly after Easter Week when my absence caused a state of chaos. At that time, I had made arrangements to put someone in charge at the Creamery, but the Committee, or perhaps one man who assumed the responsibility, would not permit it. The first man who came to take over was summarily dismissed, and an experienced manager, sent by the Irish Creamery Managers' Association, was not allowed to take charge. The strain of working in the atmosphere thus prevailing was becoming unbearable when I was deported in 1917. This time the Irish Creamery Managers' Association made arrangements for a substitute who was paid by the Association, my salary being paid to me by the Society. In addition to this, the majority of the managers contributed to a fund, which amounted to about £200, and presented it to me.

I simply could not carry on in Ardpatrick with a hostile Committee, prepared to take advantage of the slightest lapse on my part and wreck my reputation as a businessman. As a matter of fact, I would have been hounded out of it long before, but for the attitude of the Chairman, Mr. Charles McCarthy, a very honourable man who, with difficulty, made every effort to hold off the others, most of whom were merely weak and dominated by one who was determined to wreck me. When the time came

for me to resume duty at the creamery, I was aware of various charges made by members of the Committee against me, concerning neglect of duties, etc., and I insisted that, before I returned to business, a proper investigation into these charges should be made by representatives of the Department of Agriculture, the Agricultural Organisation Society and the Creamery Managers' Association. The representatives of these bodies met the Committee and had a long discussion with them. The representatives then informed me that the position appeared to them to be hopeless that the matters referred to were trivial, but the Committee were so obtuse and viciously disposed towards me that it was not possible to see how I could hope to run the business in the circumstances. I stated that it was quite impossible, unless I was allowed to manage, without being set upon, and an acknowledgement was made of the very satisfactory condition in which I had left the business, and also, that there should be some changes on the Committee. This was not possible, particularly because I was rendered helpless, due to the attacks emanating from I.R.B. sources and affecting every section of the I.R.A. The matter appeared to be of sufficient importance as to ruin me utterly.

I was later to discover that, in spite of this campaign and the difficulty found by people in general in understanding the position, my reputation in the public life of the area and in carrying on political activities was not very adversely affected. Comhairle Ceanntair, Comhairle Dáil Ceanntair, Ard Chomhairle and meetings of every description made such demands on my time that it would be difficult to carry on at my business, but too late I got to realise that my prestige was not so damaged but that with a change in

the Committee it could have been made possible for me to carry on as Creamery Manager. The representatives, already referred to, who made the investigation, each and all united in making me offers of better jobs or in supporting me in getting them. Within a few weeks, I was offered the management of a leading creamery and, later on, had offers from the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Organisations Society.

By this time, the position was beginning to be better understood. The majority of the members of the I.R.A. in the area were lined up on my side and, as they were determined to clear up the situation, I could not leave the area in any circumstances. Then came the conscription crisis. Our area had probably been the best organised in the country, but now the whole country was being organised. Delegations approached me from the Fermoy and Doon areas. As I had just agreed to accept command of what was called the Border Battalion, comprising Galbally, Emly, Lattin, Doon, Cappawhite, etc., I informed the Fermoy delegation that I could not take command of the Fermoy Battalion.

New Companies and Battalions were being rapidly formed. A meeting, for the purpose of forming a Brigade and electing a Commandant, was held in Galbally, at which were present representatives from Mitchelstown, Kilfinane, Anglesboro, Galbally, Hospital, Cola and other places. Two were proposed - D. O'Hannigan and myself. O'Hannigan, who was proposed by Jack McCarthy of Kilfinane, had no seconder. Therefore, I was declared elected. Of course, there should have been meetings of every Company to select delegates to attend the Brigade meeting referred to, but such correct procedure was not possible at the time and was very seldom carried out. The meeting in Galbally was probably as representative as any that were being held at that particular time and, from my point of view, it would have been all the

better if it had been more representative and more regular. I should mention here that it had been agreed some time previously that we would try to work on and build up the organisation in face of the conscription issue, and O'Hannigan had personally asked me to give directions to Ballylanders and Ardpatrick Companies that they were to take orders from him. At the meeting, O'Hannigan made some sort of protest to the effect that they could not accept the result of the election and that there was an irregularity in convening the meeting.

There was very great military activity at the time, and every effort was being made by the Volunteers to secure arms of any description. Seán McLoughlin, who was organising around the Tipperary area at that particular time, had, in consultation with others, drawn up rather elaborate plans for resistance to conscription. He was a good organiser and had a good deal of military training as a boy scout and otherwise, but the manner in which he carried out his work did not always appeal to the rather easy going countrymen. He was a bit too spectacular and had too much discussion.

Early in May, 1918, there were to be general mobilisations in each Brigade area, but the orders were called off by Headquarters as they did not want to give the British an opportunity of identifying the officers in each area.

About this time, I went to Dublin, bringing McLoughlin's plans with me. I must have handed them in the evening previous to my meeting with Cathal Brugha and Dick Mulcahy in Brugha's office, because they appeared to be acquainted with them. McLoughlin's scheme of organisation called for the setting up of what he referred to as the Southern Command. They did not appear to me to be impressed with these plans

but, strangely enough, Mulcahy asked me if I was prepared to act as O/C of this command. I replied that I did not feel at all equal to it, and that they must have many men better qualified. I then learned that O'Hannigan had entered a protest at Headquarters against the appointment of Commandant for the Galtee Brigade area, saying that the election had been altogether irregular. I suggested that they should order another election and arrange for proper supervision. I referred to the man (Seán O'Dea) they had sent to the area, who had failed to keep his appointment and who did not appear to be at all competent to deal with the situation. The matter dragged on, and I again demanded a proper inquiry, outlining the details that should be dealt with. One thing about which I was very much concerned was the broadcasting of statements to the effect that headquarters did not want me in the position of Brigadier.

It was in these circumstances that I got in touch with I.R.A. Headquarters and suggested, as the most satisfactory solution, that an inquiry should be held. The message to headquarters, which I had sent by hand, was evidently received by Mick Collins, because I later received a despatch from him, saying that he had arranged to send a Commandant of general rank to this inquiry.

Sometime afterwards I got a message one evening, telling me to meet this officer the following day at the 1.30 p.m. train in Knocklong. I went to Knocklong station to meet the train, but the officer did not arrive. Intending to wait for the evening train, I went into a house in Knocklong but somehow felt that Knocklong station was rather a public place, many people getting on and off the train, as well as local people seeing me on the platform

and that it would be a mistake to stay too long in the vicinity. I moved some distance away from the town. While cycling on a back road to Garryspillane, I observed three R.I.C. men approaching on bicycles. As I did not like the idea of turning around and moving off, I sat on the fence, holding my revolver. When some distance away, the R.I.C. men dismounted and walked in my direction. When they were within about two hundred yards, they remounted their bicycles and rode past me. They, as well as many other members of the R.I.C. from Hospital, Kilmallock and Felton, concentrated on the station, so that it was evident that my presence at Knocklong had been reported. I did not attend the arrival of the evening train.

On the following day, I received a despatch to meet Commandant O'Reilly in the vicinity of Ballylanders, at which place he had arrived that morning. When I met Commandant O'Reilly, I discussed with him the matter of the proposed inquiry, and I gave him an outline of what the subjects of the inquiry should be. Arrangements were made to hold the inquiry in the vicinity of Knocklong. The officers of the different Companies in the area were asked to attend and arrange for the presence of all who might be interested or could give any assistance at the inquiry.

Donnchadh O'Hannigan, Jack McCarthy and Tadhg Crowley put forward charges against me at the opening of the Inquiry, the principal one being of failure to act on a despatch supposed to have been brought to me by Seán Treacy, delivered to me at ten p.m. on Wednesday of Easter Week and on which it was said I took no action until twelve o'clock. I have related the circumstances of Easter Week which bear on this.

Another charge was that a British military officer had had access to or had seen some of my despatches. This and several other charges were not dealt with at the Inquiry, although I asked that they should be.

They, O'Hannigan, Crowley and McCarthy, proceeded at great length to examine Volunteers regarding time of Seán Treacy's arrival and time of issue of mobilisation orders. After what appeared to be hours of this I protested against waste of time, regarding something very easily explained, and about a despatch that did not exist, but it continued, and time was frittered away. I actually had no opportunity of calling those whom I wished to testify, or of dealing with the most important matter, that is, the way in which Headquarters had been invoked.

Under examination William Quirke, who had been Captain of the Galbally Company and was then Commandant of No. 2 Battalion, asked why he should have to answer questions on these matters put to him by people or men who had not been actively associated with the incidents. There was spontaneous applause from every part of the hall; Commandant ^{O'Reilly} O'Rahilly got very indignant and spoke very strongly of his authority and of his determination to exercise it.

Under examination and cross-examination it was many times testified that Volunteers, officers and Companies had been told that I was not to be recognised by order of Headquarters. The individuals responsible were named.

Seán Wall was taking notes, which must have been a wearying job. He and others went to sleep towards

morning and the Inquiry was eventually abandoned, apparently unfinished. In the circumstances it seemed strange that when Commandant ^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly arrived back a couple of weeks or so later he called meetings in each Battalion area separately at which he read out a report that the Brigade as constituted should be dissolved, the Companies in Cork and Tipperary going in with formations in their respective Counties, and East Limerick to form an area. He stated, in regard to the rumours circulated about me, that such rumours existed but that Mr. O'Hannigan had nothing to do with them. He found that I got a despatch on the Wednesday of Easter Week at ten p.m. and had not acted on it until twelve o'clock.

I attended the Battalion meeting in Knocklong, also Captain Quirke and Lieutenant Scanlon. I protested against the manner in which the Inquiry had been held, also against the findings, and said that I would insist on Headquarters dealing with the matter, that I considered that the findings, such as they were, should have been announced by ^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly to a single meeting representative of the Brigade, as had been done in the case of the Inquiry, that there was not much meaning in calling meetings of small groups in each Battalion area. O'Rahilly was very indignant and said he had already wasted sufficient of his valuable time without having to put up with that sort of thing. Lieutenant Scanlon told him that his action was outrageous and that he had no right whatever to dissolve the Brigade area. ^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly told Scanlon he was suspended, and when Captain Quirke protested he also was suspended.

^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly then ordered me to proceed with him to Cush to attend a Battalion meeting in that area. I said that, considering his attitude and what he had done to

the two officers because of their protest, I refused, and I was also suspended.

I perhaps should mention that at the Battalion meeting which had just been held I was elected Commandant of that Battalion.

They evidently found Commandant ^{O'REILLY'S} O'Rahilly's report unsatisfactory at the other Battalion meetings, and the question was very specifically asked if I had been found guilty of a dereliction of duty, and if there was any reason why I should not hold office. In any case I was elected Commandant of each of the three Battalions in the Limerick area. ^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly said that nothing definite could be done about it until it was decided of which Battalion I should take command. It does not appear that he made any reference to the fact that I was suspended, and a short time afterwards I got a despatch saying, "You are hereby suspended for disobeying an order of a superior officer", signed "Michael Collins".

The result of all of this was a state of complete disorganisation over the whole area. We did, of course, carry on as an organisation such as we had been, ignoring ^{O'REILLY'S} O'Rahilly's order so far as our area was concerned. That was also done in parts of Cork, Tipperary and Limerick.

I awaited the expected courtmartial for my alleged indiscipline, at which I hoped to have the matters I complained of threshed out, that all matters affecting the area would be gone into, and that Headquarters would eventually have to take some action in the matter.

Weeks passed by and nothing happened until the incidents associated with the rescue of Seán Hogan at

Knocklong. That, of course, created an extraordinary situation. Lieutenants O'Brien and Scanlon had been wounded, as well as Seán Treacy and Dan Breen, and the principal business after Knocklong was having them looked after, and their frequent removal from place to place to evade arrest.

All this should have had some effect on Headquarters. I learned privately that in the matter of my courtmartial Collins and Mulcahy had wanted it but ^{O'REILLY} O'Rahilly was very definitely opposed to any re-opening of the Inquiry, and the matter was left so.

All of these things, and in a way also the Knocklong incident, had a bad effect on discipline in the area. There was much bitterness. At one time some officers in Galbally were told that if they did not obey orders there would be bloodshed. If those who said that had not beaten a hasty retreat there might have been bloodshed on that particular occasion. There was a lot of talk about shooting, most of which meant nothing in particular, but at the same time such a thing could have happened then. At one time in conversation with some of the officers it was thought that I was carrying too much responsibility, and one of them, Captain Quirke of Galbally, asked me was it really wise to try to carry on and build up an organisation when evidently there was not proper control and certain people could use it as they pleased. This disorganisation was affecting political and other activities. In time I had associations with all of these and it was most unpleasant. Seán Wall had found he had a rather difficult task to perform. He was at that time doing excellent work as Chairman of the County Council and in the administration of Sinn Féin, and the military situation must have been a strain on him and

an impediment to his work.

Some time in 1919, following the Knocklong rescue, I got a message telling me that I was to go to Dublin to a meeting with Commandant Wall, O'Hannigan and Ó Muarthille. I replied that I was not prepared to go to Dublin for such a meeting, and that I would, under no circumstances, sit at a table with O'Hannigan and Ó Muarthille.

At a Feis in Kilkinnane in that year Seán Wall spoke to me regarding the disorganisation in the area. He seemed to think that I was personally responsible. I told him that there was a lot more in it than that, that the position was becoming impossible for me, and that if he thought he could manage it I would give him a free hand and leave the area altogether. This conversation with Seán Wall took place some time between the Soloheadbeg ambush and the rescue at Knocklong. I remember meeting Jim Scanlon at that time. He was arranging to disarm some police, but finding that I was lame he would not tell me anything about it. It must have been before Knocklong because Scanlon was wounded and went on the run after the latter incident.

Following this conversation the matter of the position in the Volunteers came up for discussion at a meeting of the Comhairle Ceanntair of Sinn Féin in Hospital, at which I was present. It was said to be a Volunteer matter. Some of the delegates present protested that it was much more than that, that the whole area was affected by it and demanded that something should be done.

I understood that the Cabinet of Dáil Éireann became concerned and I went to Dublin in connection with

the matter. I was not arrested at the time of the German Plot round-up in May 1918, having been on the run already, but the day after my arrival in Dublin, September 3rd, two detectives arrested me in College Green, so that that particular Inquiry was never held.

I should state that while all this was taking place I had never taken it upon myself to appoint an officer. As the constitution of the Volunteers provided that officers should be elected, the matter was left entirely to the Companies, Battalions, etc., but as it happened this system gave rise, in some cases, to personal jealousy. Another matter which raised difficulties in this way was the case of men who while they actually were Volunteers, could not be actively or publicly associated with volunteer activities because of their employment. For instance, employees of the Local Government Board, the Post Office and the Board of Education, were liable to lose their employment if they were known to be Volunteers by the British Authorities, and were in fact required to sign a statement affirming that they were not members of that Organisation. Prior to Easter Week the problem of the signing of this affirmation arose and instructions were issued by the Volunteer Chief of Staff, Eoin McNeill, that those concerned were to sign such statements and sever their outward connection with the Volunteers.

Michael Hanafin, National Teacher, and Joe Crowley, whose father held the Post Office in Ballylanders, were two of those affected by the ban on Government employees serving as Volunteers, and who, consequently did not answer the mobilisation call in Easter Week. That would be quite alright and understandable in the

circumstances if they had not indulged afterwards in severe criticism of my orders for mobilisation as having been issued without proper authority. I might add that these people were the first to make charges against me to Thomas Ashe, on the occasion of his visit in 1917, pointing out to Ashe that I had mismanaged the local situation in 1916, and, that if I had acted as they considered I ought to have done, the R.I.C. Barracks with their arms could have been captured. In this way the I.R.B. felt that they had the support of local opinion in the district in their desire to get rid of me.

After my release on 16th March, 1919, I returned to the Galtee area. There were receptions and meetings of welcome being held all over the country, in honour of the released prisoners, and in my area, when I was about to address the people, several officers approached me with the suggestion that I should deal publicly with the matters at issue in connection with the local split and so put an end to this business. However, I did not refer to it in the course of my address as I felt that it could do no good to discuss these things in public, until and unless a proper settlement and understanding had been arrived at between those concerned.

The Knocklong incident had an extraordinary effect in the area. After that event, numbers of men who had hitherto shown little interest wanted to be actively associated with the movement. I observed also, that Seán Wall's efforts at organisation were now being supported by men like Ned Lynch, who had come to Hospital some time previously, and Thomas Malone, who had been appointed county organiser for Sinn Féin, so I realised that my own efforts in this particular sphere were now of less importance than hitherto.

For this reason, as well as the peculiar difficulty of my position, as narrated in this statement, I accepted an appointment from the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society at Waterford. My financial position at the time made it essential that I should take up this employment when it was offered and as my headquarters was now at Waterford, my connection with the East Limerick Volunteers therefore ceased from that date.

My job with the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society at Waterford was concerned with the organising of capital for the Waterford Dressed Meat Industry and the Fisheries round the coast. Having had some success in this field, I was, a few months later, invited to become organiser and inspector of the National Land Bank, which I accepted.

Due to all the circumstances here narrated, I felt at the time that I had been pushed out of the military movement. On the other hand, I also felt that the work on which I was now engaged, that is, the financial and economic rehabilitation of the country, was of very considerable national importance, so I decided to give my whole attention and my best efforts to this aspect of things from then on.

SIGNED

James P. McManus

DATE

4th December 1920

WITNESS

James P. McManus

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1813-21
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